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## **MEASLES ALERT- INCREASED MEASLES ACTIVITY IN LOS ANGELES**

Recently, a cluster of measles cases occurred in the northwestern part of Los Angeles County. This brings the total number of measles cases reported this year in the County up to 6, an unusually high number, compared to previous years.

With sustained measles outbreaks being reported in many parts of the world, importations of measles into the United States can be expected, resulting in local cases of measles in communities with clusters of unvaccinated persons. It is, therefore, important that all health care providers within Los Angeles County remain vigilant regarding measles.

Measles is a highly communicable disease that can have serious complications, but it can be prevented through vaccination. Measles vaccination is routinely recommended for all children, **even when home-schooled**, and it is required for children attending any public or private school in California. Adolescents, adults, and especially persons such as health care workers who are at risk of exposing high-risk persons to measles, and persons traveling to other parts of the world, are urged to be vaccinated against measles if they don't have proof of measles immunity (record of previous vaccination or positive measles serological test results).

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health depends on health care providers to identify suspected measles cases and report them in a timely manner. Measles is one of the conditions that **must** be reported immediately by telephone (or fax) to the local health department (Title 17, California Code of Regulations, § 2500).

- **Consider measles when evaluating any patient who has an acute rash illness with fever, especially in someone returning from international travel or who has had contact with international visitors.** Symptoms usually begin 10-12 days (up to 21 days) after exposure with a prodrome of fever as high as 105°F (40.5°C), malaise, cough, runny nose, and conjunctivitis. Two to four days following the onset of the prodrome, a maculopapular rash develops. The rash usually begins around the ears and hairline and then spreads down to cover the face, trunk, arms, and legs.
- **IMMEDIATELY report any suspect cases in Los Angeles County to the Morbidity Central Reporting Unit at 888-397-3993 (phone) or 888-397-3778 (fax).** Do NOT wait for laboratory confirmation before reporting a suspect case. During non-business hours (before 7:30 am, after 5:00 pm, or weekends) call 213-974-1234. For cases among residents of the Cities of Long Beach or Pasadena, contact their respective health departments.
- **Obtain blood specimens for serologic confirmation of the diagnosis.** Blood specimens should be obtained at the time of clinical presentation and be tested for both measles IgM and IgG antibodies. Additionally, if within 10 days of rash onset, collect both a nasopharyngeal swab (place in tube of viral transport media) and a urine specimen (in sterile container) for measles virus culture.
- **Respiratory and airborne precautions should be taken to prevent transmission.** Suspect measles cases needing medical attention should not be allowed in patient waiting areas. They should be masked and placed immediately in an examination room, with the door closed. The examination room in which a patient with suspected or confirmed measles was examined should not be used again for two hours. With hospitalized patients, respiratory isolation is recommended for 4 days after the onset of rash. Listings of all exposed patients and staff will be required by the public health department from any medical facility treating a case of measles.

For technical assistance or additional information about measles or any other vaccine preventable diseases, please call the Los Angeles County Immunization Program's Surveillance Unit at (213) 351-7800.